

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Wednesday, May 14, 2003

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES APRIL 2003

Notice of Revision: Monthly retail sales were revised based on the results of the 2001 Annual Retail Trade Survey. The Annual Benchmark Report for Retail Trade showing revised unadjusted and adjusted data was released on April 30, 2003 and can be found on our website at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/data/pdf/annpub02.pdf>.

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for April, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$309.5 billion, a decrease of 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from the previous month, but up 4.1 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from April 2002. Total sales for the February through April 2003 period were up 4.2 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$) from the same period a year ago. The February to March 2003 percent change was revised from +2.1 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) to +2.3 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$).

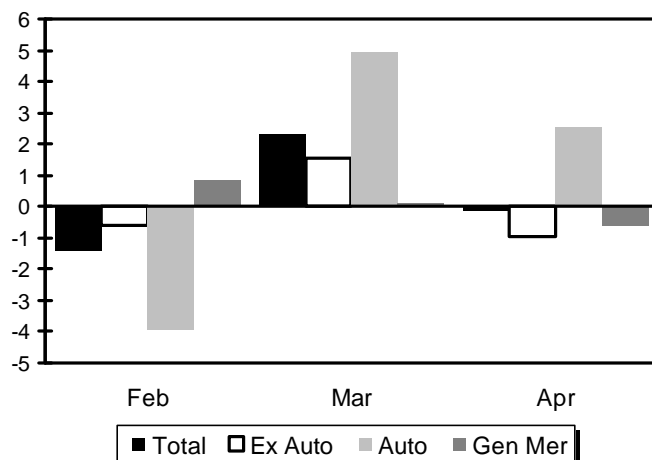
Retail trade sales were down 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from March and were 4.0 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) above last year. Motor vehicle and parts dealers were up 8.2 percent ($\pm 3.0\%$) from April 2002 and sales of gasoline stations were up 6.7 percent ($\pm 2.4\%$) from last year.

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 5,000 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms. Responding firms account for approximately 65% of the MARTS dollar volume estimate. For an explanation of the measures of sampling variability included in this report, please see the Reliability of Estimates section on the last page of this publication.

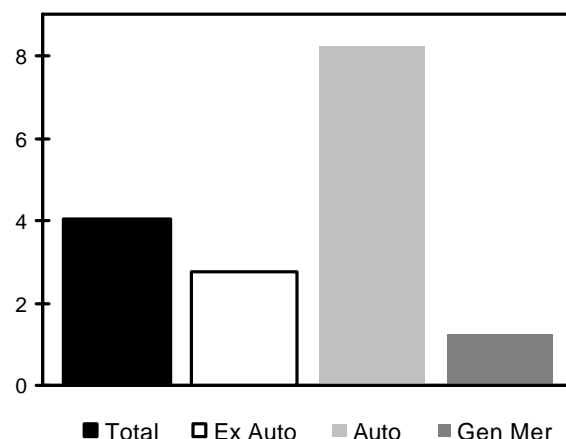
Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for May is scheduled to be released June 12, 2003 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Scott Scheleer, Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233. Telephone: 301-763-2713.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call 202-482-1986. The data are also available on the Internet - <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

**Table 1. Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services,
by Kind of Business**

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ¹				
		4 Month Total		2003			2002		2003			2002	
		2003	% Chg. 2002	Apr. ² (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ² (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr. (r)	Mar. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,163,720	4.5	309,302	305,840	269,569	294,252	294,166	309,455	309,813	302,741	297,404	293,579
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	877,717	4.5	230,781	229,129	204,635	220,998	222,023	234,061	236,275	232,672	227,755	224,309
	Retail	1,052,642	4.6	280,408	276,144	243,532	266,586	265,788	280,387	280,585	274,066	269,655	265,947
	GAFO ³	(*)	(*)	(*)	74,185	66,435	70,741	74,799	(*)	79,230	78,449	78,089	77,468
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	286,003	4.8	78,521	76,711	64,934	73,254	72,143	75,394	73,538	70,069	69,649	69,270
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	261,472	4.9	71,859	70,268	59,280	66,832	66,028	68,963	67,050	63,673	63,408	63,124
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	58,972	50,119	56,767	56,578	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,443	5,654	6,422	6,115	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	29,737	0.8	7,543	7,923	6,928	7,418	7,803	8,007	8,035	7,655	7,883	7,874
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,464	3,969	4,195	4,525	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,459	2,959	3,223	3,278	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	27,279	-0.3	6,453	7,079	6,626	6,408	7,110	7,484	7,478	7,436	7,409	7,464
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,933	4,730	4,558	4,950	(*)	5,409	5,375	5,420	5,375
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,146	1,896	1,850	2,160	(*)	2,069	2,061	1,989	2,089
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	94,411	3.2	29,823	24,379	19,124	29,040	22,951	25,900	25,964	24,193	25,312	24,579
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,269	17,296	24,018	20,336	(*)	22,627	21,041	22,259	21,634
445	Food & beverage stores.....	161,119	2.9	40,931	41,238	37,882	38,593	41,557	41,901	41,955	41,812	40,768	40,842
4451	Grocery stores	146,570	2.8	37,004	37,491	34,493	34,959	37,739	37,798	37,870	37,821	36,799	36,891
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,420	2,176	2,398	2,461	(*)	2,633	2,597	2,624	2,615
446	Health & personal care stores	61,367	4.9	15,666	15,635	14,643	14,881	15,053	15,619	15,557	15,446	15,077	14,686
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,353	12,586	12,559	12,730	(*)	13,529	13,207	12,699	12,493
447	Gasoline stations	85,051	16.9	21,825	22,901	19,999	20,375	19,209	21,760	23,132	22,882	20,395	19,152
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	49,694	0.9	13,729	13,441	11,699	13,201	13,963	14,336	14,810	14,374	14,464	14,382
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	735	608	773	802	(*)	823	796	845	849
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,864	2,287	2,940	3,035	(*)	2,908	2,823	2,899	2,869
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,647	3,618	4,376	4,688	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,800	1,504	1,828	1,953	(*)	1,879	1,832	1,858	1,841
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	23,408	-1.5	5,837	5,896	5,260	5,829	6,233	6,732	6,655	6,718	6,739	6,872
452	General merchandise stores.....	138,443	3.7	36,686	36,856	32,830	34,934	36,597	38,751	38,986	38,935	38,274	37,556
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	62,236	-5.8	16,679	16,670	14,640	17,530	18,301	17,800	18,045	18,182	19,412	19,082
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,977	14,899	17,841	18,627	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	20,186	18,190	17,404	18,296	(*)	20,941	20,753	18,862	18,474
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,206	15,539	14,638	15,456	(*)	17,702	17,578	15,894	15,549
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,980	2,651	2,766	2,840	(*)	3,239	3,175	2,968	2,925
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	32,210	-0.6	8,196	7,999	7,897	8,238	8,133	8,679	8,594	8,534	8,720	8,579
454	Nonstore retailers	63,920	9.2	15,198	16,086	15,710	14,415	15,036	15,824	15,881	16,012	14,965	14,691
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,626	8,972	9,266	9,310	(*)	9,965	9,991	9,713	9,500
722	Food services & drinking places ...	111,078	4.3	28,894	29,696	26,037	27,666	28,378	29,068	29,228	28,675	27,749	27,632

(*) Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these business classifications.

(NA) Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

Note: Totals include data for business classifications not shown separately.

(1) Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-12-ARIMA program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are released on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

(2) Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

(3) GAFO represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances(443), clothing & accessories(448), sporting goods, hobby, book, music (451), general merchandise(452), office supplies, stationery, and gift stores(4532)).

(4) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		Apr. 2003 Advance from --		Mar. 2003 Preliminary from --		Feb. 2003 through Apr. 2003 from --	
		Mar. 2003 (p)	Apr. 2002 (r)	Feb. 2003 (r)	Mar. 2002 (r)	Nov. 2002 through Jan. 2003	Feb. 2002 through Apr. 2002
	Retail & food services, total	-0.1	4.1	2.3	5.5	0.8	4.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	-0.9	2.8	1.5	5.3	1.1	4.0
	Retail	-0.1	4.0	2.4	5.5	0.7	4.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.5	8.2	5.0	6.2	0.0	5.0
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.9	8.8	5.3	6.2	-0.2	5.1
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.3	1.6	5.0	2.0	-1.0	0.0
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.1	1.0	0.6	0.2	-0.5	0.2
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-0.2	2.3	7.3	5.6	-0.9	2.3
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-0.1	2.8	0.3	2.7	1.2	2.6
4451	Grocery stores	-0.2	2.7	0.1	2.7	1.2	2.6
446	Health & personal care stores	0.4	3.6	0.7	5.9	1.6	4.6
447	Gasoline stations	-5.9	6.7	1.1	20.8	5.2	16.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-3.2	-0.9	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	1.2	-0.1	-0.9	-3.2	-2.1	-1.6
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.6	1.2	0.1	3.8	1.1	2.7
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-1.4	-8.3	-0.8	-5.4	-1.4	-6.4
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	1.0	-0.5	0.7	0.2	-0.4	-0.8
454	Nonstore retailers	-0.4	5.7	-0.8	8.1	1.6	8.0
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.5	4.8	1.9	5.8	1.7	4.6

(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Source of Data and Reliability of Estimates

Source of Data: The Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey each month to provide an early indication of sales of retail and food service companies. The Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey is a voluntary survey of a sub-sample of about 5,000 firms selected from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Firms responding to this survey account for approximately 65% of the dollar volume estimate.

Reliability of Estimates: The reliability of the estimates is a function of sampling and nonsampling errors. The margin of sampling error, as included on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence

interval. If for example, the trend estimated is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value). Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. Nonsampling error, on the other hand, can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors. Although not directly measured, precautionary steps are taken to minimize nonsampling error. Additional survey information is available at www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html.

Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Median CV ⁽²⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Trend (percent change): Median standard error ⁽²⁾ for			Revision for month- to-month change ⁽¹⁾	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.1
	Retail	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.4
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.9	1.5	0.7	1.8	0.7	1.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.1	1.7	0.7	2.0	0.8	1.3
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	4.0	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.2	1.0
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.6	0.6	0.4	1.3	0.0	0.4
444	Building material & garden eq. &...						
	supplies dealers.....	1.8	1.1	0.7	1.4	-0.1	0.7
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.3
446	Health & personal care stores	2.7	0.7	0.5	1.4	-0.1	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	1.9	0.7	0.6	1.4	0.6	0.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.6	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.7
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	2.4	1.8	1.5	2.2	-0.1	0.5
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	-0.1	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.3	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	2.9	2.7	1.5	3.2	0.3	0.8
454	Nonstore retailers	7.2	3.3	1.3	4.1	-0.2	0.7
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.1	0.9	0.8	2.0	0.1	0.7



- (1) These columns measure the difference between the estimates of trend for the same pair of data months, i.e. the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates. Revisions are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.
- (2) Medians are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.